LOCAL NEWS

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Strong Brief to Buck Withdrawal

'We're Going to Have TCA'

A brief opposing abandonment by Trans-Canada Air Lines of its Victoria-Vancouver-Seattle service and replacement by Pacific Western Airlines, will be prepared by Victoria city for submission to the Air Transport Board.

"A very strong brief" was called for yesterday by Mayor Percy Scurrah, and he also suggested that the other Greater Victoria municipalities would be glad to associate themselves with the city in submitting it.

Decision of city council finance committee to recommend that the brief be prepared resulted from legal notice of the Air Transport Board that interested persons must make complete submissions to it by March 2.

"One argument that we ought to base it on is that we are part of Canada and entitled to the service of Trans-Canada Air Lines, and are going to have it," Mayor Scurrah said.

Easter Baskets Sale Unlikely

Finance committee will recommend to city council that the application of the Optimist Club to sell Easter baskets from door to door in the city be declined again this year.

Council turned down a similar application last year because retail merchants had opposed the sale.

'Poor Taxpayer'

City Opposes Long Holiday

Victoria members of the Legislative Assembly will be asked by city council finance committee to oppose a bill to be introduced in the House by Leo Nimsick (CCF) calling for three weeks' holiday after five years' service for all employees.

The committee reached this decision yesterday and will ask council to endorse it at its next meeting.

"POOR TAXPAYER"

Mayor Percy Scurrah said fringe benefits already added 25 per cent to the city payroll, and this bill if passed would increase the amount.

"The poor old taxpayer is entitled to some consideration, that's the way I look at it," he said.

Liberals Copy Socreds

Victoria Liberals have taken an example from Social Credit in an attempt to "spice up" the party, Ward 5 president Harold Ketchell said last night.

He said a "social" meeting last night at Liberal headquarters was attended by 180 persons.

"That's how Social Credit did it," he said. "They had social parties all over. Maybe that's the answer."

'I Wonder . . .'

Two Critics Pain Council

Two letters of complaint about the amount of money spent in rebuilding old houses moved from the new firehall site nettled city-council finance committee a bit yesterday.

"When a mistake is made, they're ready to jump on everybody," said Mayor Percy Scurrah. "I wonder if we had letters from those two when we got $262,000 in assistance for the Point Ellice bridge? I wonder if they appreciated all the work done by city council that time?"

MANY CASES

"And in many other cases," said Ald. Arthur Dowell.

"One thing the letters overlook, we are rehabilitating a very depressed area and going to bring up the surrounding property and bring up the tax roll," the mayor said. "It's not quite as bad as it appears on the surface."

Parking Laws Considered

City council will consider at its next meeting two draft by-laws to implement the idea of using increased parking revenue for parking facilities and downtown improvement.

One will provide for payment of the parking-facility and downtown improvement debt from parking-meter and parking-facility revenues.

The other will establish a reserve fund into which the parking revenues will go. Transferred from this reserve fund into general revenue each year, if available, will be the equivalent of the net parking-meter revenue for 1958, about $125,000.

Generals Inspect Garrison Troops

Commanding officer of Western Army Command, Maj.-Gen. Chris Vokes and Maj.-Gen. Geoffrey Walsh of Ottawa inspected the First Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry yesterday at Work Point barracks.

Royal Oak, Esquimalt

Two Accidents Injure Five

One car was wrecked and nearly $2,000 damage was done to three others in two separate accidents last night that injured five persons.

Released after treatment for shock at St. Joseph's Hospital were Mr. and Mrs. F. E. Hambrook, 323 Kinver, and their three-year-old niece, Wendy Guthrie, same address.

Their car, driven by Mrs. Hambrook, was in collision with one driven by Warren Reid, Work Point Barracks, at Lampson and Lyall.

Two passengers in the Reid car, Carl S. Lutes and Jerry Gallagher, both of Work Point Barracks, were taken to HMCS Naden Hospital with head, face and arm injuries.

A car driven by David S. Gibb, 463 Davida, was heavily damaged shortly after 7 p.m. when it collided with the rear of a car driven by Gregory Harvey, 120 Clarence, at Glanford and Patricia Bay Highway. An estimated $700 damage was done to the Harvey car. No one was hurt in the crash.

B.C. Power Body To Seek Subsidy

Brief Being Readied For B.C. Government

B.C. Power Commission has decided to seek a subsidy from the provincial government.

This was disclosed at yesterday's Shrum royal commission hearings by Ian R. Mills, finance director of the power commission.

Mr. Mills said there has been a recent decision by the commission on the matter of subsidy.

"I believe a brief is now being prepared for presentation on this very point," he said. "It is under discussion at the moment."

He was replying to a question by royal commission chairman, Dr. Gordon M. Shrum, who said it didn't seem logical—if the power commission can be subsidized under present legislation—for it to remain without subsidy.

Mr. Mills said in his brief dealing with the financial set-up of the power commission that it received no subsidy from any source, although it is permitted to do so under the Power Act. He took the stand for the final 20 minutes of the afternoon session.

The remainder of the day's hearings—some six hours—was taken up with cross-examination of H. Lee Briggs, former general manager of the power commission.

Fired for Outburst

Mr. Briggs was fired Nov. 14 last for his outbursts against Premier Bennett's proposal to refinance government advances to the publicly-owned utility.

Asked by C. K. Guild, power commission counsel, to clarify some points in his brief, Mr. Briggs stated:

1. T. H. Crosby, retiring chairman of the power commission, failed to explore every avenue in negotiations with B.C. Electric for purchase of power.

(In the brief Mr. Briggs said Mr. Crosby "invariably took the role of mediator and pacifier" at the meetings.)

2. Position of the power commission was not fully and adequately put to the government—"that was the feeling of myself and certain other senior staff members."

3. Studies on the Homathko River power project, although only moderately promising in initial stage, are "absolutely essential" to determine relative costs of other projects on the Columbia River and Clearwater.

4. New auditing system ordered by the government shows "definite lack of faith" in staff—"in other words, this is in the nature of a Gestapo system."

"Mr. Briggs, it seems you were highly regarded as general manager," said Dr. Shrum.

Tell of Your Stand

"Couldn't you have done a great deal for the power commission by telling the commissioners of your stand? It seems to me, it would have been helpful if you had said: 'If this thing is carried through I will have to resign.'

"It seems to me this would be the most effective way to get what you want—to protect the commission's customers from higher rates."

Mr. Briggs replied that his objections to the refinancing scheme were "very, very clear" to all members of the commission, but admitted he never raised the question of resignation.

He started collecting material for press releases on the day he received authority to negotiate terms of refinancing with J. V. Fisher, government financial adviser, because he was convinced commissioners were already negotiating "on the side."

"Wasn't it unfair to treat members of the commission in that way?" asked Dr. Shrum.

"I have no further comment," Mr. Briggs replied. "I considered the matter was definitely taken out of my hands as a result of correspondence between Mr. Crosby and Dr. Fisher."

Mr. Briggs also defended the decision to build the $15,000,000 Georgia thermal plant near Chemainus, saying it provides "spare capacity in machines and power for the whole Island system."

Three Years Ahead

He said the thermal plant only supplies power to meet load peaks. The same power could have been bought from B.C. Electric, he said, "but we would have had to contract three years ahead and then buy the power whether we wanted it or not."

Dr. Shrum said the royal commission was naturally concerned that two existing power distribution companies co-operate on such matters as marketing surplus power where possible "to benefit the customer."

During the morning session, Mr. Briggs refused to name the power commission employees he said told him that top B.C. Electric officials received "red carpet treatment" into the premier's office.

He was silent when BCE counsel Bruce Robertson asked him to name his sources.

Mr. Robertson then wanted to know "why the visits of BCE officials with the government should cause harm to the power commission?"

"I have no answer I care to express," said Mr. Briggs.

MRS. MARY MICHAUX

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Seen In Passing

Mrs. Mary Michaux working on the records of the St. Joseph's Hospital building fund. (She handles publicity for the hospital women's auxiliary. She and her husband, **Emil**, a Royal Canadian Navy bandmaster, have two boys, **Robert**, 16, and **Leonard**, 11. Her spare-time activities are playing bridge and the hospital auxiliary) . . . **Fred "Hopalong" Painter**, in a jeep, chasing two Shetland ponies on Gorge Vale golf course . . . **Fred Colmer** hopping about with his foot in a cast after stumbling over a doormat and breaking an ankle bone . . . **Paul Grimshaw** excited at the possibility that the lump of stuff he found on the beach was ambergris—then disappointed when **Dr. Clifford Carl** told him it was only wax . . . **Dan Christian** looking preoccupied as he crossed the street.

Fire Victims

$754 Fund Total

Cash gifts and pledges to aid a James Bay family of six who were burned out Sunday totalled $754.75 last night.

Head of the family, Donald S. McQueen, who has been unemployed, also accepted a job yesterday as a painter.

Drive co-ordinator Mrs. Harold Ketchell of the James Bay Community Club said the "response has been wonderful, besides money we have had many offers of clothing and furniture."

Would-Be Thief Frightened Away

Police believe a would-be thief was scared away from Shearing's Food Market, 810 Catherine, after he had taken the trouble to break a front door window, sometime Wednesday night.

A rock was used to break the glass near the lock, but a bag containing about $50 in coins inside the store was not touched, police said.

527 Pints Blood Total

Victorians, including 127 Royal Roads cadets, donated a total of 527 pints of blood to the three-day Red Cross blood clinic which ended yesterday.

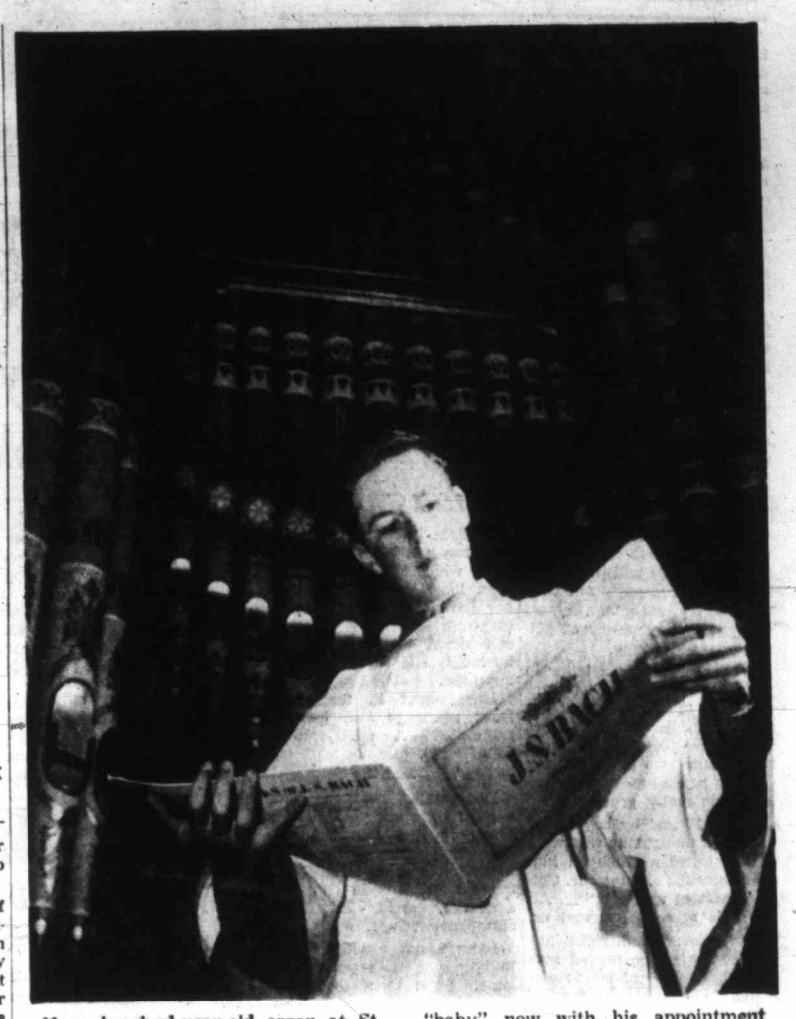
"The clinic was very successful," a Red Cross official said.

Ships Home Today

Seven Esquimalt-based ships will return home today at 10 a.m.

The vessels HMCS Sussexvale, Stettler, Antigonish and Beacon Hill are completing a 30-day cruise to the Hawaiian Islands area. Jonquiere, New Glasgow and New Waterford are also returning from a short cruise.

Wives and families will be allowed to meet the ships, naval officials said yesterday, but parking facilities "are at a minimum."



Huge hundred-year-old organ at St. Paul's Church, Esquimalt Road, is 14-year-old Master David Palmer's "baby" now with his appointment this week as regular church organist. —(Colonist photo.)

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Boy Music Master Doing a Man's Job

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St. Paul's Church Regular Organist

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Master David Palmer, 14, boy organist at the old naval and garrison church of St. Paul's, is happily and melodiously exploding the old saying: "Don't send a boy to do a man's job."

This week "Master" Palmer—and that's how he's officially to be known, says Padre Jack Anthony Roberts — was appointed full-time paid organist, replacing just-retired T. R. Myers.

"It's not really so hard," the Grade 9 pupil at S. J. Willis Junior High School said yesterday.

"Once I got on to the foot pedals (30) and the three measures (keyboards), it all went pretty smoothly."

Another thing which tended to stop the youthful musician at first was coping with the 20 "stops." A stop is a control button to release a sound "which imitates instruments."

Rafters of the historic old church on Esquimalt Road rang yesterday when the 110-pound boy sat down to play the 2,000-pound-plus instrument.

Hands and feet scampering, Master Palmer confidently demonstrated his adult ability by playing Bach for a Colonist reporter and photographer and Padre Roberts.

"When I learn the Wedding March everything should be fine," said the former pupil of one-time Christ Church Cathedral organist Graham Steed.

Before his present appointment, Master Palmer, who would like a career as church organist, was assistant organist at the Cathedral.

A piano pupil for nearly five years, he was introduced to the organ a year ago by Mr. Steed.

His first official day at St. Paul's was last Sunday and "he did just fine at all three services," said Padre Roberts.

"The boy deserves a lot of credit, both for his ability and application."

The young church music-maker is required to play three times on Sundays, Thursday evenings at choir practice and the odd rehearsal.

"But he shows up on his own a lot oftener than he has to," said the padre, "mostly on his bike, too."

Master Palmer, who lives at 3959 Cedar Hill Crossroad with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. A. W. Palmer, fits in his organist duties without any trouble, he says.

"I have to forego a few after-school activities, but that's about all," he said. He plays piano in the school orchestra.

I Can't Live on $20 But Some People Do

By TED SHACKLEFORD

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Many Must Dip Into Savings

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I'm afraid I can't accept Clifford Alexander's challenge issued amid cheers and chuckles at the Victoria Labor Council meeting Thursday night.

Mr. Alexander challenged me to back up my claim that I can live for a month on $19.

I'd be interested more in the challenge if it were based on the facts, rather than fantasy.

CLOSEST I CAME

Mr. Alexander apparently hasn't read my articles very closely. I have never said I can live on $19 worth of food. The closest I came to it was Sunday morning when I began the story with:

"I may not be able to do it, myself, but there is no doubt that it is possible to live on $55 a month."

"A pensioner can buy sufficient food to provide a balanced diet over a month for less than $20 . . . and here's the proof."

BLUNT ADMISSION

If it will make Mr. Alexander any happier, I'll admit bluntly what I have already admitted tacitly—I can't live on $20 worth of food for a month.

And I still have some 23 days to go before I will know whether or not I can afford food and accommodation on $55 a month, let alone the myriad other expenses of living.

The food lists, the diet and other things published in these stories have been for the help of pensioners, generally, but whether Mr. Alexander agrees or not, there are people living in Greater Victoria on $20 worth of food a month.

On the other side of the picture there are people on pensions of $55 a month who CAN'T get by and have to draw on their life savings.

ELDERLY COUPLE

I was talking to an elderly Burnside couple in this situation, yesterday afternoon.

"I don't think any one can live decently on $55 a month," the 72-year-old wife said. "We have to spend a little bit of the money we have in the bank."

Food costs this couple between $25 and $30 each a month, and there are other items, rates and taxes, medical expenses and household costs which melt away their combined $110.

"Our taxes went up $80 a year last year and another $20 this year," the woman said. "And we're supposed to put the sewer in, too. That will cost about $130 more."

ELASTIC STOCKING

A friend bought an elastic stocking for the woman—she was unable to buy it, herself. Entertainment is very limited, with only free movies occasionally.

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Yesterday I slipped up again and forgot to buy meat for dinner before the butcher's shop closed. For breakfast I had puffed wheat with hot milk, pineapple juice, six pancakes with marmalade jam and two cups of tea.

Lunch was half a pound of fried cod (20 cents) and half a tin of spinach (15 cents for the tin), with two slices of toast and marmalade and two cups of tea.

Dinner was a scratch meal of fried potatoes, the rest of the spinach, half a can of corned beef, and tea.

I am using the puffed wheat I bought at the start as a snack in case I feel hungry before going to bed at night.

I put powdered milk in the bowl, pour in boiling water, which gives me hot milk and then I put the puffed wheat in that. The wheat shrivels and contracts in the hot milk so that a bowl full is at least filling.

Colonist reporter Ted Shackleford has been assigned to live on $55 for a month to discover how senior citizens on old-age assistance payments live and what their problems are.

He will be available in The Daily Colonist office—EV 3-4111 — between 4 and 5 p.m. each day.